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DRESS DECORATION BY THE HARDING PROCESS.

BY WILLIAM R. BRADSHAW.



THE new method of decorating walls with plastic applique has been applied with great success to textile fabrics. Not only portières, friezes and lambrequins are thus decorated, but ladies' dresses can be made resplendent by the Harding process at a comparatively low cost. The present age is remarkable for bringing within the reach of the people artistic effects that were formerly the exclusive possession of the wealthy. At a reason-

able expense any lady can have her ball dress embroidered in a style that would pale into insignificance the most gorgeous costumes that appeared on the Field of the Cloth of Gold.

The discovery of this new process of personal decoration is a most fortunate one for actors and actresses, stage managers, lady lecturers, opera singers, and every one whose profession requires immense effect in personal attire. Mr. J. W. Harding of New York City, is the inventor and patentee of the process of applying plastic ornament of any kind whatever to dress goods and textile fabrics of every description, as well as to the surfaces of walls and ceilings. The method is rapid and economical, and for a sum of twenty dollars, a lady can wear a dress that could not be duplicated by Worth, as far as appearances go, for a thousand dollars. Mr. Harding tells us that ladies are going crazy over his work, and he is at present establishing a decorative factory on a large scale exclusively for the decoration of dresses for the fair sex. The prospect for an immense business of this kind are very encouraging.

Mrs. Annie Wolf, the Philadelphia lady, who lectures on Health, Beauty, Love, Marriage, Life and Death, has just had several platform costumes decorated by the Harding Process, and she enjoys the distinction of possessing the first dresses decorated in plastic applique in the United States. A process similar to that employed by Mr. Harding has recently been attempted in Berlin, where it is all the rage at present with the fashionable beauties and professional stars.

Mrs. Wolf favored us with a view of her dresses in a hotel in New York prior to starting for Baltimore early in March, to begin her spring lecturing tour.

A dress of white gossamer silk crêpe cut in the Greek style has a continuous classic border of plastic applique in gold around

the bottom of the skirt. The amictus of the robe has the Greek palmate in gold. The pointed belt has a tracery of classic bays in gold relief. There are also similar traceries on the bands of the neck and arms of the bodice. The ornament, as will be seen in our reproductions is both chaste and gorgeous and possesses great refinement in outline.

"This dress," said Mrs. Wolf, "is for my lecture on 'Beauty.' You know the Greeks made a religion of beauty, and what is so appropriate for such a subject as a Greek costume?"

I admitted the truth of the assertion. Mrs. Wolf in her Greek dress looked a picture of loveliness. She is a *petite* blonde, with finely formed, spirituelle features, as may be seen from her portrait that accompanies this article. She has been described as one of the most beautiful, most intellectual and most spiritual of American women. She is a metaphysical philosopher of the nervous type, and possesses brilliant insight. She is a transcendentalist, and has delved into the philosophies of Zoroaster and Pythagoras. She possesses an ardent longing to portray the

truth and beauty of the higher problems expressed in man. She has made a study of social ethics; with her fine intuition has discovered a direct connection between Beauty, Love, and the spiritual forces within us, and that Love is the secret of life.

"Beauty, with me," continued Mrs. Wolf, "is a growing subject. My ideas on this subject are not only the result of careful study, but have also been given me by watching the revelations of nature. The Greeks obtained from their sacred shrines revelations of a refinement and splendor that, being manifested in their art, has for two thousand years led captive the art of the world. The Delphic Oracle was the secret of the supernatural beauty of their life. The classic elegance of their work was produced by the guidance of an Unknown Voice." After a pause, she continued, "Now another subject that I discuss is Love, and here is the costume for my lecture on this subject."

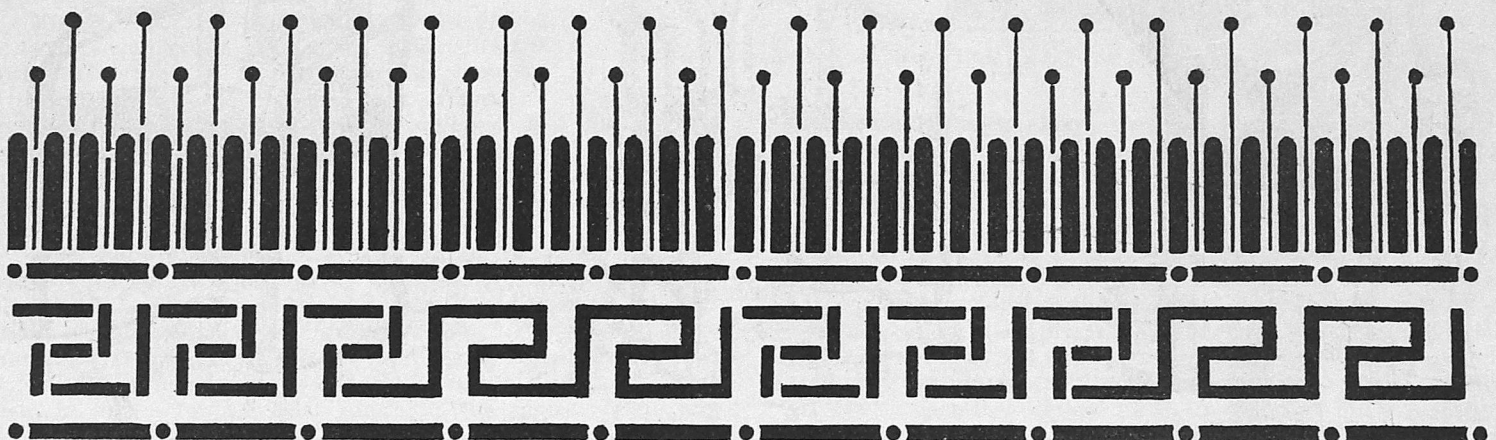
The costume for Love is indeed beautiful. It is a classic gown of pink crêpe de Chine, the skirt of which is decorated with a Hymen's torch in gold, springing from gold and crimson poppies symbolic of Love's hypnotic influences. The entire skirt above the border is powdered with detached

quivering tongues of fire in gold relief, tipped with vermilion bronze. The accompanying illustration of this decoration is taken directly from the dress itself. The effect is one of great splendor.

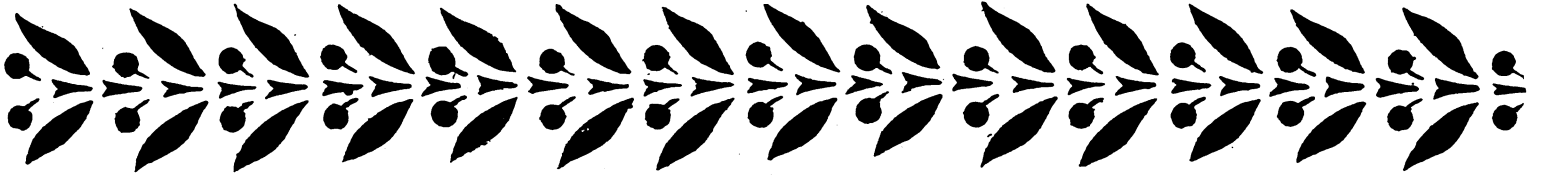
"Love, with me," said Mrs. Wolf, "is, perhaps, the most important subject I discuss. Love is the one fact that justifies the existence and perpetuation of the human race. Love is the secret of life itself. The inner light that fashions the world, that builds empires, is Love. As the physical light of the sun clothes and decorates what would be otherwise a barren earth, so also the light of love vivifies, warms and enriches man's entire nature."



MRS. ANNIE WOLF.



"A dress cut in the Greek style has a continuous classic border of plastic applique in gold."



"The pointed belt has a tracery of classic bays in gold relief."

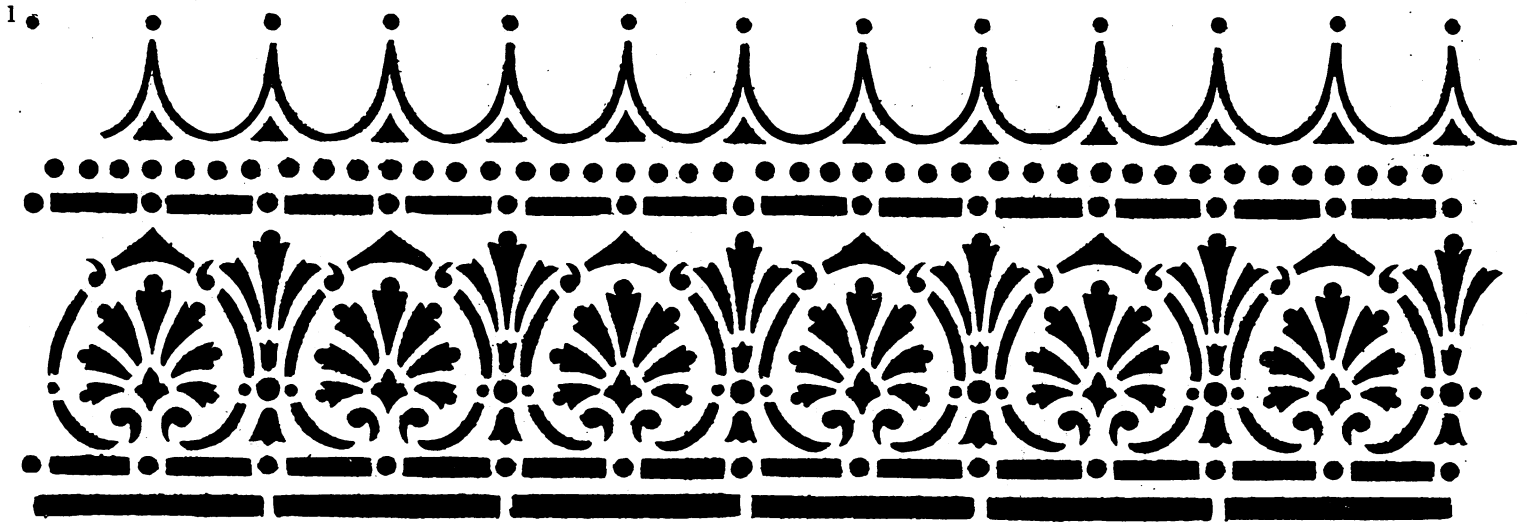
"You believe then, that love is the supreme good?" was inquired.

"Why, Love," said she, "is simply a divine harmony between the material and the spiritual natures. As the symbolic flames cover my costume, wrapping me in their fiery embrace, so also love for all things should enfold the soul, putting it *en rapport* with the Spiritual Sun above, and oppressed humanity beneath."

"But what about love between the sexes—do you speak on that phase of the question?"

"Why of course I do. I speak of its physiological and psychological conditions, and show that women need to cultivate love. It is the sign of a strong and healthy nature, and I show

the lotus is the emblem of life; the Oriental symbol of the re-creative forces. In our hurrying age, with its life-wearing haste to accumulate money, men become nervous wrecks. Imperious fashion causes women to trample upon the laws of health, their bodies become deformed and diseased, and motherhood, mentality and moral growth are denied them. Diet, bathing, good temper and sleep are the cardinal principles of health. In the sun is life won, for daisies do not grow in impenetrable shade. I speak not only of health, but also of refinement of body, and show the connection between unselfish ideas and refined forms. The magnetic fluid is also a powerful agent of health. It is the cosmic energy of the material world."



"The amictus of her robe has the Greek palmate in gold relief."

the absurdity of those who judge the emotions of others by their own lack of feeling."

"What other subjects do you lecture upon?"

"Here is the costume for my lecture on 'Health.' Do you perceive the symbolism?"

This is a "Cleopatra" costume of serpent green silk and crêpe, with a border about a foot in width, the motive being the Egyptian lotus, in plastic applique, which we also reproduce. The outer parts of the flowers are in gold, the flowers themselves being in silver white, while the stems are in dark green bronze. The effect is weirdly beautiful.

"Green is the color of nature's garb," said Mrs. Wolf, "and

For "Marriage" Mrs. Wolf has a strange fancy of wearing black velvet. "Not," she says, "to represent the mournfulness of the bond of wedlock, but simply to express the dignity of the situation. For "Life," the gown is a soft, white clinging crêpe decorated in spider webs, applied in a plastic applique of silver, and over the skirt is powdered an artistic design in silver, to represent the froth and drift of the sea, and tears and dust of the earth, of which life is made up

The dress for "Death" is a glorious sun color painted in a clouded design of opaline tints to represent the mystery and glory of death. It looks like the weird calm beauty of moonlight, blending with the richness of the golden dawn.



"The costume for 'Love' is decorated with a Hymen's torch springing from gold and crimson poppies, symbolic of love's hypnotic influence. The entire skirt above the border is powdered with detached quivering tongues of fire in gold relief, tipped with vermillion bronze."



"The Cleopatra costume has a border about a foot in width, the motive being the Egyptian lotus in plastic applique. The outer parts of the flowers are in gold, the flowers themselves being in silver white, while the stems are in dark green bronze."

Mrs. Wolf is a woman who takes a happy view of death.

The decoration of the personality naturally leads to the decoration of its environment. The house with its arrangements, are the shell of the human animal, and the decoration of an interior is not something independent of the individual, but should be in harmony with the development of the being it accommodates. On the subject of house decoration, also, she has prepared a series of lectures, giving unique practical advice, each scheme being dominated by her revelations of Astral form, line and color.

Mr. Harding not only decorates dresses, but also portieres and draperies of various kinds. A pair of portieres are decorated

NOW while I do not believe that the faculty for art in its position, or creative and inventive sense can be taught, yet on its negative side, certain principles can be laid down which would prevent, at least, mistakes being made.

PREACHING, alone, will not save a world; and if the world insists on the adoption of conditions of life and habit, law and custom, which tell against external beauty and its enjoyment, its votaries can but wear out their lives in protest, until the arts become extinct.

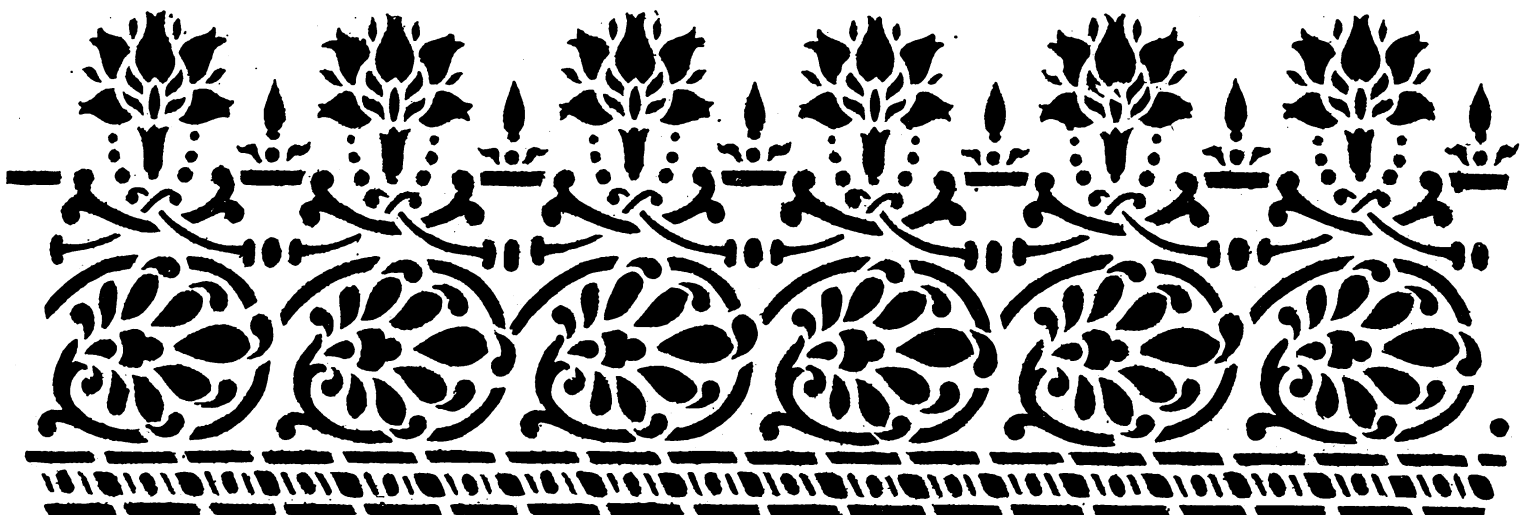


"A pair of green flax velour portieres are decorated with a dado of lilies, the motive showing roots, stems and flowers in silver white applique, a beautiful combination."

with a dado of lilies, the motifs showing roots, stems and flowers in a stately arrangement. The fabric is a green flax velour, and the ornament is in silver white applique, a beautiful combination. A tussah silk curtain, or drapery for a mantelpiece, in turquoise blue, has an Indian border in gold applique along the bottom. The border is eight inches wide, and the motifs are carnations and palms, beautifully treated in the Hindoo style. Mr. Harding's advertisement on third page of our cover describes more particularly the various kinds of decorative drapery made by this process.

VARIETY, a mixture of various shaped forms; alternation in different measures of various elements in ornament.

SOME people, of a one-sided view, imagine that natural forms, being beautiful if copied, must necessarily be beautiful, however applied. They regard Nature as a storehouse of "ready-made ornament," instead of a book of reference for ideas and principles to be thought out with diligence, and applied with care. "Ready-made ornaments" are too often like "ready-made clothes," badly fitting, and ill suited to the subject. He must be careful to adapt them by a judicious conventionalism. There are two kinds of conventionalism found in historic examples: first the conventionalism of principles or ideas; and, second, the conventionalism of facts. The first has to do with the principles and ideas of growth common to specific forms; the second with individualizing particular plants and objects.



"A tussah silk curtain, in turquoise blue, has an Indian border in gold. The motifs are carnations and palms, beautifully treated in the Hindoo style."